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THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE.

JOHN McLELLY, ROBERT W. SHOPELLE, BYRON ANDREWS.

WASHINGTON, D. C., MAY 18, 1899.

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THE FATE OF THE OVERSTREET BILL.

There has been a good deal of misunderstanding about what was known as the Overstreet Bill, which was passed as a rider on the deficiency bill by both Houses of Congress, copies of which were given out at the Document Room at the Capitol as an act, upon the supposition that it had become a law. The bill was one which declared that a pension granted became a vested right, and could not be taken away from recipient without a 30 days' notice and due trial of charges made.

We publish the following letter from the author of the bill, explaining how it happened that the measure, which was supposed to be at one time safely passed, in the end failed.

Replying to your favor of the 25th inst., I beg to inform you that the bill introduced in Congress by myself, to which you refer, did not become a law. While it passed both Houses, yet—just as the last of the session, before it had gone to the President—it was recalled by the Senate, and in the rush of business at the close of the session, it failed to become a law.

Yours respectfully, JESSE OVERSTREET.

It was at first reported that Admiral Dewey was anxious to return home in time to attend the G.A.R. National Encampment at Philadelphia. This was delightful news for the comrades. Now the news is that he will make the return voyage very leisurely, and take four months time. This would bring him too late for the National Encampment. It is earnestly hoped that he will adhere to his original resolution, and be present with the comrades at the 33d National Encampment.

The best proof that things are progressing satisfactorily in the Philippines is that Admiral Dewey is coming home. If there were the slightest occasion for his remaining he would remain. It will be remembered that he refused the Government's detail for a pleasant journey to Paris to meet the Peace Commission, because he felt that he was needed at his post of duty.

The Department of Maryland, Sons of Veterans, which includes the District of Columbia and the States of Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and North and South Carolina, holds its 13th annual Encampment in Macabees Hall in this city next Monday. It promises to be a large and profitable gathering. Comrades of the G.A.R. are cordially invited to attend, and it is hoped that they will do so in great numbers. We should give our sons all the encouragement we can, and show every interest in their affairs.

There is a fine prospect of a big trade with China in Indian corn. The Chinese take to maize more readily than wheat, and naturally, for the bulk of their food has been a sort of millet, which belongs to the maize family. It is a mistake to think that they are wholly rice-eaters. Only those in the neighborhood of the sea-coast eat rice. They raise maize, but it is of a poor quality, and the yield is scanty. The price of American maize ranges from 65 to 80 cents, gold, and so far the supply is not equal to the demand. Maize can be sent from San Francisco to Chefoo at from \$4 to \$11 a ton, and it is estimated that it can be laid down in China at a cost not exceeding \$1.10, "Mexican" silver, or 55 cents gold, a bushel. If there is a current of shipments started in that direction, the cost will be greatly reduced, and leave a handsome profit for shippers.

THE INDICTMENT AGAINST HENRY CLAY EVANS.

Upon the inauguration of Maj. McKinley as President of the United States, Henry Clay Evans sought and secured the appointment of Commissioner of Pensions. Whatever his ideas may have been upon taking the office, those of the veterans of the country and their friends as to his course and duty were quite clear and strong. For four years the country had rung with denunciations of the cruelty and injustice of the administration of his predecessor, Wm. Lochren. The papers had vigorously assailed Lochren's policy; at every gathering of veterans it had been severely attacked; the National Encampments of the Grand Army of the Republic had pronounced dignified but exceedingly earnest remonstrances against it, and during the campaign which had resulted in Maj. McKinley's election, every stump had been a rostrum for vehement condemnation of it. These facts were as well-known to Mr. Evans as to any other citizen of the country, and the mere acceptance of the place by him was a distinct pledge to remedy the evils which had formed so large a part of the issues of the campaign. It was a case of false pretense on his part—an egregious confidence game—for not only has he not remedied substantially one of those evils, but he has aggravated and intensified most of them. It is clear now that he never had the slightest intention of making the reforms which the people demanded by their votes in 1896, and that he took the office with the intention of defeating their clearly-expressed will.

So much for the general charge. Now for the specifications which support it: 1st Specification.—There had been universal complaint of the Boards of Examining Surgeons as constituted by Mr. Lochren. These had been revolutionized by him. Prior to his entrance they had been non-partisan, and largely constituted of ex-Surgeons of the army who had experience with the veterans and knowledge of and sympathy with their ailments. Lochren made the Boards strictly partisan, and made them up of young fledgling graduates, to whom the income was a great inducement. Mr. Evans made many flourishing announcements, and in some instances appointed new Boards, but in the main the Boards continue as formed by Lochren. The pretense that these are under the protection of the Civil Service has been thoroughly exposed in these columns. But it is only fair to say that these Boards have treated the veterans a great deal better than Mr. Evans has, and a large part of his baleful work has been that of cutting in two the allowances they have made the veterans, or in rejecting them altogether. Even the Lochren Boards have been entirely too liberal to suit him.

2d Specification.—In response to the complaints of the veterans Congress passed the act of March 6, 1896, to stop Lochren's juggling claimants under the act of June 27, 1890, out of the arrears accruing between the filing of the claims and their allowance. Lochren treated this law as a dead letter, and Evans has continued his practice.

3d Specification.—The per centage of rejections under Evans equals that under Lochren, and this at a time when the execution of the laws should be still more liberal, owing to the advancing years of the veterans, the intensification of their disabilities, and consequent greater urgency of their needs.

4th Specification.—He has retained around him, and is guided by, the same ring in the Pension Bureau which directed Lochren's policy. He has advanced and promoted them, while reducing or refusing promotion to clerks and officials who were known to be in favor of executing the laws according to their spirit and purport. One of these, the chief executioner under Lochren, a resident of the District of Columbia, he has advanced to the position where he has the last "say" on all cases under the act of June 27, 1890, and can suppress any inequality, and the yield is scanty. The price of American maize ranges from 65 to 80 cents, gold, and so far the supply is not equal to the demand. Maize can be sent from San Francisco to Chefoo at from \$4 to \$11 a ton, and it is estimated that it can be laid down in China at a cost not exceeding \$1.10, "Mexican" silver, or 55 cents gold, a bushel. If there is a current of shipments started in that direction, the cost will be greatly reduced, and leave a handsome profit for shippers.

5th Specification.—Commissioner Raum's Order 164 placed disabilities under the act of June 27 on the same plane with those arising under the old law, and gave corresponding allowances. Lochren's Order 225 and the decision in the Bennett Case, revoked all this, and gave a much narrower and harsher interpretation to the law. Order 164 still stands revoked, and

Order 225 is still in force, in spite of the appeal of the National Encampment, G.A.R., at Cincinnati. As illustrations of this, a claimant has to prove to-day disabilities which would give him from \$24 to \$30 under the old law, in order to get \$8 or \$10 under the act of June 27, and enough to give him from \$12 to \$15 in order to get \$6, the minimum rate. The loss of the sight of one eye was pensioned by Black under the old law at \$12. Raum fixed the rate at \$8 under the act of June 27. Lochren took the rating away, and Evans does the same. The loss of an eye is pensioned under the old law at \$17. Raum gave \$12 under the act of June 27. Lochren reduced it to \$8, and Evans continues the rate. Raum gave \$8 for deafness in one ear. Lochren took this away, and Evans continues, though under the old law it is pensioned at \$10. Scurvy resulting in loss of teeth was pensioned by Raum at from \$6 to \$12. Lochren took this away, and Evans does the same. Loss of forefinger and thumb was pensionable under Raum at from \$6 to \$12. Nothing under Lochren and Evans. Raum gave pensions for loss of toes, which crippled a man in walking. Lochren and Evans give nothing. We might go on indefinitely reciting illustrations of the harsher rulings of Lochren which are maintained in their fullness by Evans.

6th Specification.—Lochren denied pensions to widows who had an income equal to or exceeding \$96 a year. Evans continues this denial.

7th Specification.—The treatment of evidence in support of claims is cruelly unjust. The sworn testimony of reputable physicians who have been the family doctors of claimants for a term of years, and have absolute professional knowledge of the existence of rheumatism, heart disease, ruptures, and similar ailments sufficient to entirely disable a man for manual labor is treated with contempt. The findings of the duly qualified Boards of Examining Surgeons are little, if any, better. Their recommendations are disregarded, and their ratings arbitrarily reduced, sometimes one-half, sometimes more.

Every one of these allegations can be abundantly supported by irrefragable evidence. In whatever light it is viewed it is seen that the present Commissioner is not a fit man for the place. Evans must go.

THOROUGHLY ALARMED.

Commissioner Evans is thoroughly alarmed, as he has every reason to be, over the action that the Department Encampments of the G.A.R. are almost certain to take. If these follow the advice of THE NATIONAL TRIBUNE, and speak out the feelings of the veterans, they will make a manifestation that President McKinley cannot help heeding, and Evans's fall is certain. He understands this, and has been sending men and letters to the various Departments to endeavor to forestall any action against him. Last week men and letters were sent to Illinois, New York, and Wisconsin, with earnest appeals to well-known and influential comrades to do their utmost to save Evans from censure. He is pulling every string that he can. Those who have political aspirations he is trying to cajole with promises to use his great influence with the Administration in their behalf. To others he is making misrepresentations as to what he is really accomplishing for the veterans. We do not think that all this will avail anything. The feeling everywhere against Evans is too deep-seated and strong to be overcome, or even disregarded. To those who know him, his promises of political assistance are valueless. He has little influence with the Administration, and needs all he has to retain his present place. Furthermore, one of his besetting sins is political ingratitude. He has always been too ready to forget those who have helped him politically.

If the great Departments of New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, Indiana, and South Dakota follow the example of Missouri and Kansas, and speak out unmistakably, his doom is certain. This disgraceful business will be finished up at once, and all that will be left for the National Encampment at Philadelphia to do will be to thank the President for listening to the just complaints of the comrades.

Evans must go.

While the resolutions passed by the New Hampshire Encampment are very temperate, their meaning is unmistakable, and they are a severe indictment of the maladministration of Commissioner Evans.



Si Klegg as a Veteran

[Si Klegg and his chum Shorty, both of the 200th Inf., at Chickamauga engage in a fierce battle. Si and Shorty capture a rebel flag, but both fall in the melee. They are taken off the field in bad condition. Deacon Klegg hears about it and journeys to the hospital. He fails to be able to buy some chickens for Si's broth on account of the order of taking U. S. money. So he raids his room in the darkness, drops a \$5 bill at the feet of the owner, and dashes away in time to escape capture by the Johnnies. He makes a savory dish for Si and Shorty. Foraging again he surprises and captures a team containing provisions prepared for the men in a rebel camp by the same people from whom he got the chickens. Being conscientious, he tries to return the team later. Rebel artillery frightens the horse, which demolishes the wagon. A company of Union cavalry relieves the Deacon of



We Shot Him. Was That All Right?

the horse and gives him a cow, which is claimed as Gen. Joseph's. The General recognizes Mr. Klegg and consents to let Si and Shorty go home with him, which they do. Shorty gets a letter from a sweetheart he has never seen. The letter is read before the family, and makes Shorty so ashamed that he leaves secretly to return to his regiment, and wakes up at Jeffersonville, Ind. After recovery the partners start to the front with a squad of boy recruits.

The Boys Have a Little Initiatory Skirmish With the Guerrillas.

The train passed Shelbyville in the course of the afternoon, and halted on a switch. First of reading Si was standing at the door of the car, looking out over the country, and trying to identify places they had passed or camped at during the campaign of the previous summer. Suddenly his far-seeing eyes became fixed on a pile by the roadside, and he called out to the boys: "Guerrillas," said Shorty.

Si nodded affirmatively. "Skeetin' around the country, to jump this train, or some other," continued Shorty. "This one, most likely," answered Si. "Yes," answered Shorty, with an estimating glance at the direction of the nose of the train. "We'll aim at strikin' us at some bridge or deep cut about 10 miles from here."

"Where will they probably get sometime after dark," asked Si. "Yes," said Shorty, "they'll be at the conductor and engine."

The train had started in the meanwhile, but presently the conductor came back into the engine. He had been a soldier, but so severely wounded as to necessitate his discharge as incapable of further field service. "I hardly think there's any danger," said Conductor Madden. "Things've been very quiet this side the Tennessee River ever since last October, when Crook, Wilder and Minty belted the life out of old Joe Wheeler down there at Farmington and Rodgersville. Our cavalry gave them a awful mauling, and then they were lucky enough to escape across the river, having secured partly well satisfied to stay on that side. A hell's mint of 'em were drowned trying to get across the river. Our cavalry's been patrolling the country ever since, but hasn't seen anything of consequence. Still, it is possible that some gang has managed to sneak across a blind-ford somewhere, and in hopes to catch a train. Guerrillas are always where you find 'em."

"Well, I'll bet a lot of 'em are out there," said Si. "That's what guerrillas that we saw, and they're making for this train. The boys in Nashville some how got information to 'em about it."

"Then the guerrillas," affirmed Shorty, "sure the right bower takes the left. None of our cavalry's stringin' around over the hill-tops. Then, I made out some white horses, which our cavalry don't have. It's just as Si says, then Nashville spies 'a put the rebel cavalry out us."

"Then cowardly, sneaking, death-deserving rebels in Nashville," broke out Conductor Madden, with a torrent of oaths. "Every man in Nashville that wears citizen's clothes ought to be hung on sight, and halt the women. They don't do nothing but lay around and take the oath of allegiance, watch every move we make like a cat does a mouse, and send information through the lines. You can't draw a ration of handkerchiefs without they're making for the train. They don't get the gravel in their craws to go out and fight themselves, and yet they've cost us a hundred times as many lives as if they had. Why does the General allow them to stay there? He ought to order rocks tied to the necks of every blithering 'em, and fling 'em into the Cumberland River, and then pour turpentine on the infernal old town, and touch a match to it. That's what I'd do if I had my way. There's more blithering trouble to the lot in Nashville than in any town on the footstool, not barring even Richmond."

"Nashville certainly is tough," sighed Shorty. "Specially in gamblers. Worst town I know of that ever fumbled a deck or skinned a greasy out of the last cent of his hominy. Say, Si, do you remember that time when I cleaned out of my whole pile down there at Murfreesboro, with them cards that I'd dipped with a pair of scissors, so I'd know 'em by the feel, and he never ketches on till his last shingle was gone, and then I throwed the pack in the fire?"

Well, I seen him down there at the depot, smellin' around for suckers. I told him to let our boys alone, or I'd snap his neck off short. Great Jehosophat, but I wanted a chance to get up town, and give some of 'em a good delirious. I believe what you boys say. You're not the kind to get rattled, and make rebels out of cedar-bushes. All the same, there's nothing to do but go ahead. My orders were to take this train through to Chattanooga as quick as I could. I can't stop on a suspicion."

"No, indeed," assented Si and Shorty. "There's no place to telegraph from till we get to Bridgeport, on the Tennessee, and if we could telegraph they wouldn't pay any more to mere reports of having seen rebels at a distance. They want something more substantial than that."

"Of course they do, and very properly," said Si. "Is your engineer all right?"

"Game as they make 'em, and loyal as Abraham Lincoln himself," responded the conductor. "Well, I believe our boys 'a all right. They're green, and they're fresher than colts in a clover field, but they're all good stuff, and I believe we kin stand off any ordinary gang of guerrillas. I'll chance it, anyhow. This's a mighty valuable train to risk, but it ought to go through, for we don't know how badly they may need it. You tell your engineer to go ahead carefully, and give two long whistles, if he sees anything dangerous."

"Every kind—shot-guns, pistols, rifles, and lock-up, caplocks—every kind. Now, you mustn't ask me any more questions. Don't bother me."

"Yes, sir; I won't." Quiet for at least five seconds. Then: "Have the guerrillas guns that'll shoot through the sides of the cars?"

"Probably." "Then I'd rather be on top, where I kin see something. Kin they shoot through the sides of the tender, and let all the water out, and stop the engine?"

"Guess not." "Haven't they any real big guns that will?"

"Mebbe." "Kin we plug up the holes, anyway, then, and start again?"

"Probably." "Hain't the engineer got an iron shield that kin git behind, so they can't shoot him?"

"Can't he turn the steam out 'em, and scald 'em if they try to git at 'em?" "What'll happen if they shoot the head-light out?"

"They wouldn't it be a good idea to put a lot of us on the cow-catchers, with fixed bayonets, and then let the engineer crack on a full head o' steam, and run us right into 'em?"

"Great Scott, Pete, you must stop askin' questions," said Si desperately. "Don't you see I'm busy?"

Pete was silent for another minute. Then he could hold in no longer: "Sergeant, jest one question more, and then I'll keep quiet."

"Well, what is it?" "If the rebels shoot the bell, won't it make a noise that they kin hear clear back at Nashville?"

The engine suddenly stopped, and gave two long whistles. Above the screech they heard shots from Shorty, and the two boys with him.

"Here they are, boys," said Si, springing out, and running up the bank. "All out, boys! Come up here and form!"

As he reached the top of the bank a yell and a volley came from the other side of the creek.

Shorty joined him at once, bringing the two boys on the engine with him.

"We've bin remainin' through this deep cut," he explained, "and jest come out on the approach to the bridge, when we see a little fire away ahead, and the headlight showed some men runnin' down on to the bank on the other side of the creek. We see in a moment what was up. They've jest got to the road, and started a fire on the bridge, that's about a mile ahead. Their game was to burn that bridge, and when this train stopped, burn this one behind us, ketch us, whip us, and take the train. We shot at the men we see on the bank, but probably didn't do 'em no harm. They're all pullin' down now to the other bank, whip us out, and git the train. You'd better deploy the boys along the top o' the bank here, and open on 'em. We can't save that bridge, but we kin this, and the train, by keepin' 'em on the other side of the creek. I'll take charge of the point here with two or three boys, and drive 'em off any of them that tries to set fire to the bridge, and you kin look out for the rest o' the line. It's goin' to be long law work, for you see the creek's purty wide, but our guns 'a carry further'n theirs, and if we keep the boys well in hand, I think we kin stand 'em off without much trouble."

"Sure," said Si confidently. "You watch the other side of the bridge, and I'll look out for the rest."

The eager boys had already begun firing, entering into the spirit of the thing with the zest of a game of town-ball. Shorty took Sid Mackall and Harry Joslyn down to the cover of some large stones behind which they could lie and command the approach to the other end of the bridge with their rifles. Sid took the other boys and placed them behind rocks and stumps along the crest, and instructed them to fire with as good aim as possible at the flashes from the other side. In a minute or two he had a fine skirmish-line in operation, with the boys firing as deliberately and accurately as veterans. The engineer had backed the train under the cover of the cut, and presently he and the conductor came up with guns and joined the firing-line.

"I say, Shorty," said Si, coming down to where that worthy was stationed, "what'd you think o' the boys now? They think it's more fun than squirrel-huntin'." Listen."

They heard Monty Scraggs's baritone call: "Say, Alf, did you see me salt that feller that was yellin' and creatin' at me over there? He's cussin' now for something else. I think I got him right where he lived."

"I wasn't paying any attention to you," Alf's fine tenor replied, as his rammer rang in his barrel. "I've got business o' my own to tend to. There's a feller over there that's firing his shot-shovel at me that I've got to settle, and here goes."

"The 200th Infantry Volunteers couldn't put up a purtier skirmish than this," murmured Si, in accents of pride, as he missed his gun and fired at a series of flashes on the farther bank.

"I say, tell that engineer to uncouple his engine, and bring it back up here, where the headlight'll cover the other side," said Shorty.

"I'll make the other side as light as day, and we kin see every move, while we're in the dark."

"Good idea," said Si, hastening to find the engineer.

He was none too soon. As the engine rolled up, flooding its advance with light, it brought a storm of bullets from the other side, but revealed three men creeping toward the cover of the bridge.

"Sergeant," said Shorty, "let me have a couple to go on the engine with me."

"Let me go. Let me go," they seemed to shout at once, holding up their hands in eager school-boy fashion.

"I can't take but two of you," said Shorty; "more'd be in the way." They all pressed forward. "Count out. That's the only fair way," shouted the boys in the center.

"That's so," said Harry Joslyn. "Stand still, till I count. Inury, Ory, Ikery, Anny, Quevy, Quavy, Irish Navy, Filleston, Felleston, Nicholas—Buck! That's me. I'm

He rapidly repeated the magic formula, and pronounced Sid Mackall "It." "He didn't count fair! He didn't count fair! He never counts fair!" protested the

others; but Si hustled them into the cars, and the train started. It had grown quite dark. The boys sat silent and anxiously expectant on their seats, clutching their loaded guns, held stiffly upright, and watching Si's face as well as they could by the dim light of the single oil lamp. Si leaned against the side of the door and watched intently.

Only little Pete Skidmore was unrepressed by the gravity of the situation. Rather, it seemed to spur his feet, his hands and his mouth to number activity. He was everywhere—at one moment by Si's side in the door of the car, at the next climbing up to peer out of the window; and then clambering to the top of the car, seeing legions of guerrillas in the bushes, until sternly ordered back by Si. Then he would drop the butt of his musket on the floor with a crash which would start every one of the

tant nerves to throbbing. And the questions that he asked:

"Say, Sergeant, will the guerrillas holler before they shoot, or shoot before they holler?"

"Sometimes one, and sometimes the other," responded Si, absently. "Keep quiet, Pete."

"Shall we holler before we shoot, or shoot before we holler?"

"Neither. Keep perfectly quiet, and tend strictly to your little business."

"I think we ought to holler some. Makes it livelier. What sort o' guns has the guerrillas?"

"Every kind—shot-guns, pistols, rifles, and lock-up, caplocks—every kind. Now, you mustn't ask me any more questions. Don't bother me."

"Yes, sir; I won't." Quiet for at least five seconds. Then: "Have the guerrillas guns that'll shoot through the sides of the cars?"

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